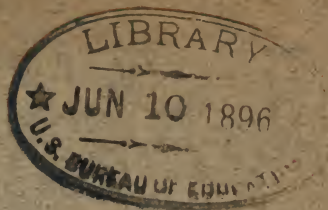


LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS.



ADOLPH SUTRO'S

LETTER

To the Regents of the University  
of California

AND TO THE

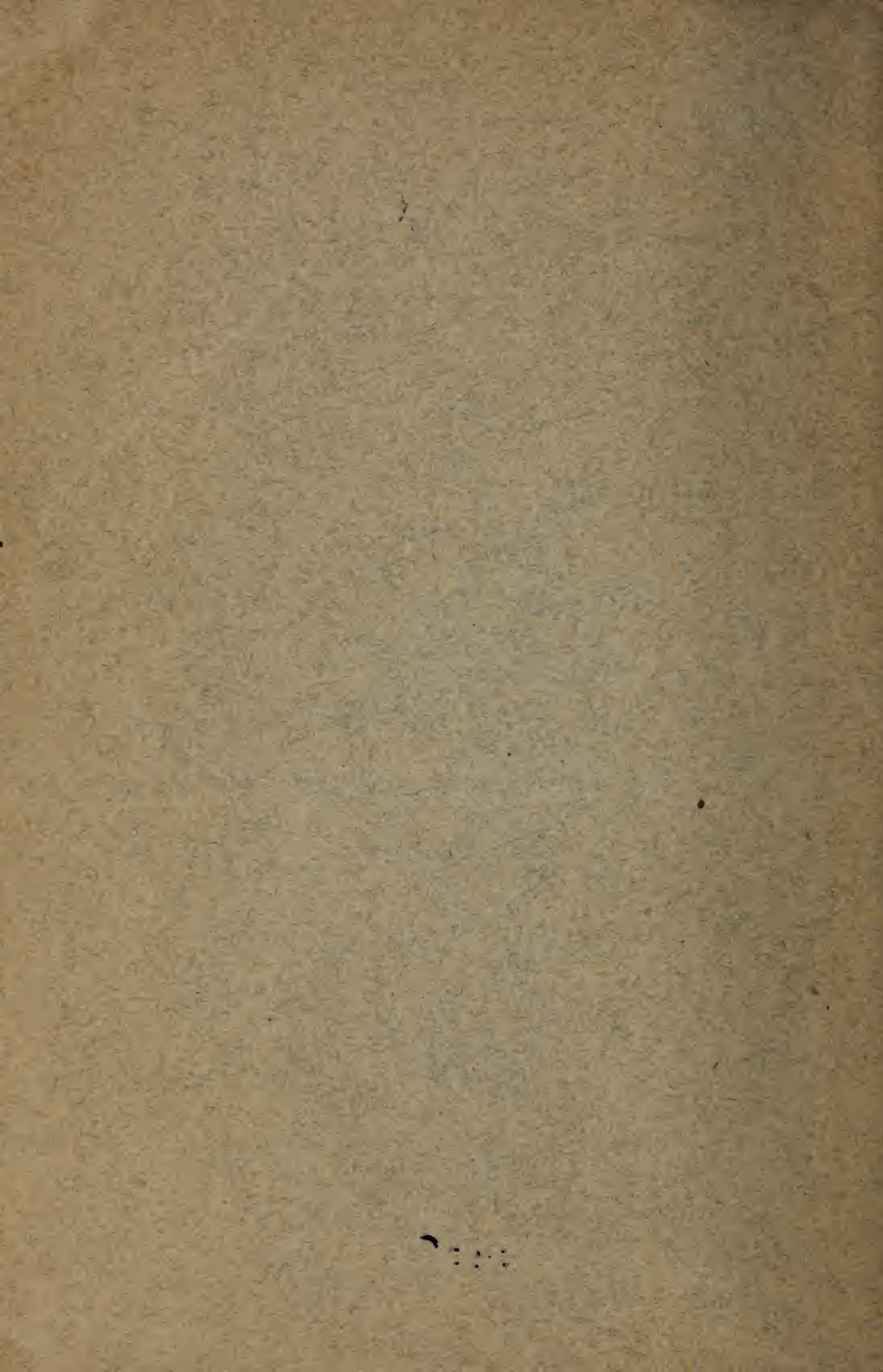
Committee of Affiliated Colleges

ON THE

SELECTION OF A SITE

FOR THE

Affiliated Colleges



SAN FRANCISCO, September 5th, 1895.

*To the Regents of the University of California, and  
to the Committee on the Selection of a Site for the  
Affiliated Colleges.*

GENTLEMEN:—It is fit and proper that at this time I should say a few words in regard to the selection of the site for the Affiliated Colleges of the University of California.

I have offered to the Committee one-half of the original site, selected by me several years ago for the Sutro Library, consisting of 26.369 acres; that is 13.042 acres for the College, and 13.327 acres for the Library.

In making this selection I was guided by the following considerations:

*First.*—This spot is nearly the geographical center of the City and County of San Francisco, and, as a great public Library is intended not only for the present generation but for many generations to come, we should give due weight to the probable future center of population.

*Second.*—This site is located within two blocks south of and near the entrance of Golden Gate Park proper, on a rising eminence, with a magnificent outlook over Park, Ocean, Golden Gate, the shores of Marin County and the hills of Contra Costa. Buildings erected on this spot, will present a prominent land-mark



and may be seen not only by visitors to Golden Gate Park but also from all parts of the western half of the City.

*Third.*—The front part of this tract, forms an almost level plateau, with hills rising behind planted with a forest of pines, cypresses and acacias, which will form a beautiful dark background for, and in contrast to the buildings erected thereon; at the same time making it possible to have lovely terraced walks under the trees for the benefit of students and visitors.

*Fourth.*—There are but three streets, south of Golden Gate Park, running east and west, which can be made available for street car traffic to the ocean, H, I and J Streets. South of these Mount Parnassus and a range of hills rise to a height of 900 feet for a length of three miles, inaccessible for railroads, until you reach the Industrial School and the Ocean Boulevard. For this reason, the three streets, between the Park and the Library site will be sure to be utilized for electric or other roads, notwithstanding the effort now being made to have it appear that there will be no street car communications and service in that neighborhood.

*Fifth.*—This locality, forming a recess in the hills, is much sheltered from the westerly winds and amongst the trees the climate resembles that of the warm foothills of the Coast Range.

*Sixth.*—It is but fifteen minutes ride from the New City Hall, which is now considered a central point; the time will come, however, when this College site will be the center of population. The growth of the

city is directly on this line, and the country to the west thereof, with its pure ocean air, diminished quantity of smoke, dust and bacteria, will rapidly build up.

*Seventh.*—Here drudgery of student life is relieved by esthetic surroundings, the grandeur of nature is inspiring and spurs the scholar to higher achievements.

*Eighth.*—One of the great inducements for the selection of this particular tract as a Library site was on account of its topography. On both the east and west ends, almost to the line of J Street (which should hereafter be known as "Parnassus Avenue") rising hills project that form an almost perfect protection against any general conflagration reaching this spot. Many valuable libraries in ancient and modern times have been destroyed by fire, and immunity therefrom should be one of the first considerations.

These are some of the reasons that caused me to select this particular spot for a Library site. In offering one-half of the site for the Affiliated College building, the same reasoning was followed; for the same advantages that apply to a Library site, and are desirable for its purposes and visitors, also apply to a large extent, to a College site.

Car fares throughout the city, are now, and probably never again will be more than five cents, and an additional five or ten minutes on the cars, going to or coming from the College, or to and from Hospitals, in a populous city, can be of but little consequence, especially as the location of these institutions may, as the city grows, be changed.

N. Y. State, 8.

Now please permit me to say a few words as to the special value of the Sutro Library and the general value of libraries to Colleges.

The Sutro Library consists at present of about 200,000 volumes, but counting all titles is probably nearer 300,000.

To give some idea of its value, I will quote what Andrew J. White, formerly President of Cornell University, afterwards United States Minister to Berlin and to St. Petersburg, one of the foremost scholars in the United States, said in a letter to Dr. J. M. Buckley, editor of the *Christian Advocate*, in which paper it was printed, in 1892 :

"I must confess that of all the amazing things on the Pacific Coast—and I encountered surprise after surprise—the most unexpected was the discovery of the Sutro Library, and of the fact that so few people in California knew anything about it.

Mr. Adolph Sutro is one of the most wealthy men upon the Pacific Coast, well-known for the public spirit he has shown in his great mining enterprises and for his beautiful creations at Sutro Heights and elsewhere. About the year 1883 he began very quietly the founding of a library. His fundamental theory is worthy of notice. He saw that of libraries for popular use there would be a sufficiency—very many men can see the necessity of these—he therefore determined to develop a library, which while it should be useful for citizens generally, should be especially attractive to scholars and valuable in developing the higher thought and work of the Pacific Coast. In this view he bought outright several European Libraries, each of great importance in some special department, and then supplemented these by large purchases at important sales in Great Britain and on the Continent. The Library of the Duke of Sunderland, the great collection of duplicates belonging to the Royal Library



at Munich, the Dahlberg and Buxheim libraries were among the principal sources from which he drew. His agents abroad have since been steadily purchasing under the advice of experts, whom Mr. Sutro has called to take charge of his books, until he has now accumulated in the City of San Francisco about two hundred thousand volumes—and a wonderful collection it is. Every branch of science, literature and art is well represented. Many of the works are of the costliest. Among them are numbers of rare illuminated manuscripts, a very large collection of early printed works, especially of the Reformation and renaissance periods, with over thirty thousand volumes, many of them exceedingly costly, dating from the Civil Wars and Cromwellian or Commonwealth periods in England.

Looking around among them, I passed from a set of all the folios of Shakespeare to Diurnal, published the day after the execution of Charles I, and then to a bewildering multitude of other things of intense interest to the historical scholar. Especially curious from an historical point of view is a collection which Mr. Sutro has made in Mexico, which will prove a mine for the coming investigator of Spanish-American civilization. There is also a very large mass of Hebrew manuscripts, which will evidently some day reward investigators in Semitic history and literature. *With considerable acquaintance among the libraries of the United States, I should rank this one already among the first four in value, and it is rapidly increasing.* It is Mr. Sutro's purpose to erect a building for it in the City of San Francisco and to throw it open to the public. Being so near to the two California Universities it cannot fail to be of immense value to them. I found at my visit that some of the professors and students were already beginning to use it, even in its present unsuitable quarters.

Among other proposals of Mr. Sutro which scholars will appreciate is his plan of issuing bulletins containing the reports of the most valuable investigations made by scholars in the library. This cannot fail to attract numbers of young men ambitious of distinction to the neighboring institutions of learning."

Professor Jordan, of the Stanford University, on his first visit to the Sutro Library remarked:

“Had I known that such a library existed in California, I could have had Professor Burr, of Cornell, come to Stanford University, for he declined a call on account of the supposed lack on this coast of library material, for his special investigations.”

Professor Burr was thereupon sent for, and came to San Francisco; he spent the three days he was here on the ladders of the Sutro Library, and, when he was through, concluded to accept the professorship. He returned to Cornell with the intention of coming here; but the Regents of that place brought such a pressure to bear upon him, and so largely increased his salary, that he finally concluded to remain.

Pertinent to the above is the following extract from Professor Burr's letter to Mr. Sutro, dated Cornell, June 25th, 1892:

“ \* \* \* No, I am not coming to California—at least, not at present. But it is no longer for want of books. The Sutro Library removes that obstacle entirely. I came back from California wholly prepared to accept President Jordan's offer. But, when the authorities of Cornell not only met the ultimatum they asked me to make, but met it unanimously and so generously that I could not doubt the heartiness of their action, I could not turn my back on my old home. Here, too, I have a work, and one very dear to me.

But, believe me, I shall forget neither the Sutro Library nor your generous hospitality to me as its visitor. There is much I want to say to you about it. My enthusiasm over the remarkable collection you have brought together does not abate. It is, I think, beyond all comparison the best collection in America, both as to numbers and as to quality of the books of the 15th century; and I gravely doubt if it has any rival this



side of the Atlantic for its literature of the 16th century. Rare books of which I had never before seen a copy you have doubly, triply, sometimes quadruply, on your shelves. For any work I may have to do in the contemporary literature of these critical centuries of the Renaissance and the Reformation, there is no place in America—I am not sure if any in Europe—to which I shall so surely turn as to the Sutro Library. Nor is this the only field in which I noted your phenomenal wealth. In travels of every age, in church history, canon law, and theology, in the history of all the sciences, especially the natural sciences, in curiosa of many sorts, your shelves are a Golconda of treasures. I envy the scholars who are to help you exploit them and the librarians who are to make your collections complete. \* \* \* Again let me thank you for your charming hospitality at Sutro Heights and in the Sutro Library. Whether or not I ever become a Californian, those will always be red-letter days in my memory.”

I give these quotations in order to show in what estimation the Sutro Library is held by scholars.

The selection of the books was made at a favorable time, under fortunate and extraordinary circumstances.

The Sunderland Library and that of the Duke of Hamilton, in England, the Monastery of Buxheim Library and that of the Duke of Dahlberg, Germany, came under the hammer during that time, and large purchases were made therefrom. Then there was the Royal State Library at Munich, that had absorbed the libraries of all the confiscated monasteries of Bavaria, which, besides other valuable works, furnished for our library over 4,000 incunabula, probably the best collection in existence.

Then there is the Library of the Secretary of the London Chemical Society, the collection of Parliament-

ary documents and proceedings from the year 1,000 A. D. to this day, formerly the property of Lord Macaulay, and which he used in writing his history; the codified laws of England, from the library of Lord Cairns; medical, botanical, geological, astronomical, mathematical, and other scientific and technical collections; a collection of 20,000 pamphlets of the Commonwealth times, and another collection, similar in numbers, relating to Mexico and its history, manuscripts of great variety and endless value, many on parchment, in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, German, English, Spanish and Arabian.

All this, of course, forms but the nucleus of a great reference library for the sciences, arts and mechanics. Science advances so rapidly that only the latest editions of modern books should be purchased, when the library is actually ready to be opened, and that is a mere question of dollars and cents, for an order for all modern books can be placed with booksellers, and filled within a few months. So it is with scientific periodicals and papers: they will all be supplied when the library opens.

As to the general value of such a library as an adjunct, or, more properly speaking, as a nucleus, for a college, an examination of the great European centers of learning will afford the best illustration.

Go to Oxford, with its magnificent Bodleian Library, the pride of England; go to Cambridge; go to London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna and St. Petersburg; go to Rome and look at the Vatican Library; go to our own Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Princeton, and other colleges; go

wherever there is the highest intelligence, learning, advancement in science, mechanics and general knowledge, and you will find the finest libraries.

San Francisco and California may well feel proud to have at the command of their students such a library, which will redound more to the credit of the State than anything that has up to this time been accomplished in that direction.

Respectfully submitted,

ADOLPH SUTRO.









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